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DEPARTMENT FOR AF AND AF/E
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [ET](#) [ER](#) [SO](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: STATE MINISTER TEKEDA ADDRESSES NWC
DELEGATION

REFz 8-

TERRORISM A TRUE REGIONAL THREAT

[¶](#) 15. (SBU) Tekeda criticized the assertion that Ethiopia was exaggerating the threat of terrorism in the region. Such allegations from "experts" had hampered Ethiopia's capacity to build counter-terrorism relationships within and outside the region, and thwarted coordination efforts. Underscoring that Ethiopia was an "honest broker," Tekeda highlighted that Ethiopia had long faced numerous terrorist threats, including a 1996 assassination attempt on one of its government ministers, serious bomb threats, and other narrowly averted violent attacks.

[¶](#) 16. (SBU) Tekeda noted that the April 13 IGAD Ministerial communique (reftel) acknowledged Ethiopia's leadership role in the region. (NOTE: The communique, *inter alia*, "expresses its appreciation to the Ethiopian government for all the sacrifices it has made to promote the common position of IGAD Member States... to protect the region from terrorist and extremist force." END NOTE.)

[¶](#) 17. (SBU) Tekeda repeatedly asserted that only in "recent months" had the U.S. and Ethiopia aligned their counter-terrorism efforts, with Washington taking Ethiopian counterparts seriously.

ETHIOPIAN AMONG YOUNG AND FRAGILE DEMOCRACIES

[¶](#) 18. (SBU) Lack of sustainable resources and of security on the continent made it simpler to destabilize African governments, Tekeda said. Although both the TFG and IGAD have had their share of challenges, both continued to act as governing and

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coordinating bodies, helping to "grow" democracy in the region. Western partners may not appreciate how difficult and lengthy a process democratic institution-building is in the region, Tekeda said. He noted that he had spent much of the previous week in Nairobi, discussing organizational

issues and fundraising with the organizing committee for Somalia's national reconciliation conference. In contrast, in Asmara, a Somali contingent with Eritrean backing was likely plotting a new government for Somalia, he said, serving to counter regional peacekeeping efforts.

¶9. (SBU) Tekeda said Ethiopia was among a growing number of young and fragile democracies. Western partners should therefore show more patience with Ethiopia's fledgling brand of democracy, and be aware of the impact of populist anti-GOE rhetoric. Some allegations of GOE human rights abuses were simply false; it was "untrue" that Western partners cared more about democracy in Ethiopia than Ethiopians themselves did.

¶10. (U) Poverty was one of the GOE's largest security threats, Tekeda said. The GOE was balancing the need to bridge the gap between the rich and poor, with how it invited multinational enterprises to help grow its economy. Striking a careful balance among business growth, trade relationships, inflation management, and poverty alleviation, were GOE priorities.

¶11. (SBU) COMMENT: Tekeda's comments echo those of other GOE principals, underscoring that counter-terrorism and promoting regional security are the GOE's external priorities, while building democracy and alleviating poverty are its domestic priorities. Tekeda's assertion that the U.S. has only "recently" aligned its counter-terrorism efforts with Ethiopia is likely meant to underscore that Ethiopia has long supported Somalia's TFG, despite U.S. reluctance to do so earlier. END COMMENT.
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